

**Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism**

February 25, 2016

VDSS Central Regional Office

1604 Santa Rosa Road, Henrico VA 23229

**MINUTES**

Board Members present: Lettie Bien, Jessica Bowser, Elizabeth Childress, Tynetta Darden, Vanessa Diamond, Ashley Hall, Amy Nisenson, Seema Sethi, Karen Stanley, Rachel Thomas, Laurie Turner, Steven Valdez, Leslie Van Horn, and Leah Walker

Staff present: Kim Brown, Gail Doyle, Amanda Healy, Gail Harris, Eva Hite, and Gay Plungas

**Advisory Board Meeting Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 10:40 a.m. by Board Chair, Elizabeth Childress. The meeting was held at the VDSS Central Regional Office at 1604 Santa Rosa Road, Henrico VA. Liz welcomed everyone. Amanda Healy introduced Gay Plungas, a new AmeriCorps Program Officer.

**Adoption of the Agenda**

A motion was made to adopt the agenda. The motion was properly seconded and passed.

**Adoption of the October 29, 2015 minutes**

A motion was made to adopt the October 29, 2015 minutes. Leah Walker asked that the minutes be corrected to add her name as present. Liz asked if there were any other changes to be made. A motion was made to change and adopt the minutes. The motion was properly seconded and passed.

Liz then distributed Board Membership Certificates and lapel pins from the Governor's office to each Board Member. Board members then had a short discussion on the process of re-applying for their term on the Board.

**Communications Training**

Liz introduced Board Member Amy Nisenson to deliver training to the Board on how to communicate about volunteerism and about the work of the Board, AmeriCorps and the Office on Volunteerism & Community Service. Amy talked about how important it is to speak with a common voice and to be able to promote service. She noted that staff can be a great resource for tools and information. Amy noted that an elevator speech is a 30 second opportunity to talk about the Board's work and volunteerism around the state. Amy went over the sample elevator speech, talking points and the communications and social media information. She said that it is important to know what is happening with volunteerism in the Commonwealth. She reminded Board Members to talk about why they are passionate about volunteerism. She gave some examples of being consistent, and examples of events the Board should promote.

Gail Harris added that the Board can promote several areas of the work of OVCS including encouragement of volunteerism in Virginia, national service including AmeriCorps, the Governor's Awards for Volunteerism and other special events. Gail also noted that the Board can emphasize

Governor McAuliffe's interest in service and support for volunteerism across Virginia. Amy recommended first engaging the audience, and then calling for action. She would like everyone to feel comfortable giving elevator speeches after this training. Board Members then shared stories about their own passion for service.

The Board separated into groups of four to practice their elevator speeches using a variety of scenarios supplied by Amy. Each group had a different scenario and they discussed how to have more impact in different areas. The scenarios included civic engagement, Governor's Volunteerism Awards, and sponsorship opportunities. The members of the Board had the chance to talk about what each group discussed and ask questions. They touched on the Governor's Volunteerism Awards and how social media can be used to promote the event. They touched on how to tie together sponsorship for the conference, Volunteer Virginia statistics, and how they relate specifically to the audience. It was noted that any sponsorship would be to the Virginia Service Foundation and not the Virginia Department of Social Services.

Board Members agreed they would like to have this information in their handbooks. They talked about soliciting sponsorships and it was noted that the staff cannot ask for donations or sponsorship. It would be helpful to have talking points on each arm of National Service.

#### **AmeriCorps Investments in Virginia: a Strategic View**

Gail Harris shared a slide deck focused on the upcoming grant cycle. It is anticipated that requests for funding will far exceed available funds so the review process and decision making will be challenging.

Gail reviewed the various funding streams and the Guiding Principles that apply to funding. She shared a comparison of similar sized states and grants which showed that Virginia has made many more, small grants than peer states (20 grants in Virginia vs. 10-12 in peer states). She also displayed the relatively small amount of funding that Virginia has received from competitive awards. Gail thanked Board Members Ashley Hall and Leah Walker who helped with the proposal reviews for the current grant cycle. Gail noted it is ok for staff to help with the program applications that are competing for national funding.

For the 2016/17 formula application, the office anticipates huge competition for available funds, with several applications coming from new programs. We expect larger, more stable agencies and applicants serving as intermediary partnerships. In order to have programs that will be stable and able to compete at the national level, we need to invest in fewer, large stable programs.

#### **OVCS Director's Report**

Gail Harris delivered the Director's Report on the following items:

- Volunteerism Conference: The conference has been moved from fall to spring to accommodate work cycles. The next conference will be in May 2017 in Richmond. May 16-17, 2017 are the tentative dates and the Board will be notified once those dates have been approved.
- Year of Service and the James Madison University Summit on Higher Education: This was a follow-up summit to the William & Mary College Summit last fall. The goal is to have as many Universities and Colleges sign the College Compact which commits them to some actions to grow service or community engagement.

- Volunteer Centers of Virginia: OVCS is working to reconnect with the volunteer centers in Virginia. We will be supporting the Centers by helping with convening, meeting, system assessment, etc.
- Financial Disclosure forms will be needed and that the Board members will receive information from the Virginia Ethics Council. We will provide a VDSS contact if there are any questions.
- 2-1-1 VIRGINIA: Gail advised the Board that 2-1-1 Virginia has four outreach specialists who are available to come out to organizations and speak on resources. She noted the purpose of 211 VIRGINIA is to connect citizens of Virginia with health and human services.
- Staffing update for the AmeriCorps Program Officer and Fiscal Officer position openings. She advised staff are in the process of filling both positions.
- The Board then watched a video about Governor and First Lady McAuliffe being awarded the Voices of National Service award.

### **Public Comment**

Ashley Hall gave the Virginia Service Foundation report. She reported the Foundation is in full cooperation with VDSS on the focus on programs. Ashley noted the location of the Volunteerism Conference at the Double Tree Inn in Midlothian. Ashley talked about sponsorship opportunities for the conference and for the Governor's Volunteerism Awards. Ashley reported the Foundation has discussed the levels of sponsorship and the idea having more levels to encourage sponsorship.

### **CNCS State Director's Report**

Tynetta Darden's reported for the Virginia CNCS Office. She indicated that CNCS has a new Vista manager Max Fienberg. She also indicated that their office would be working in strong partnership with OVCS to support the Mayor's and County Leaders Day.

### **Committee Meetings**

The Board then broke into sub-committee meetings at 1:05 p.m.

### **Committee Reports**

Board Members reconvened at 1:58 p.m.

#### **Communications Committee Report:**

Laurie Turner reported that the Committee first wanted to thank everyone who helped with Governor's Volunteerism Award reviews. She reported that each nomination was reviewed by 3 people. Laurie said the Committee thanks Leah Walker for her effort to publicize the awards in Education. She reported they had more Education nominations and total nominations this year than ever before. The awards ceremony will be at the Governor's Mansion again this year. The tentative date is April 18, 2016, awaiting confirmation. She reported that the Committee discussed ways all nominees might be notified of their nomination for 2017. She said the Committee will discuss this further. Laurie said the Committee wants to make a request to the Governor's Office for letters to nominees. She said the committee discussed possibly getting Board Letterhead or Stationary. She noted the Committee will also discuss this further. Elizabeth and Gail suggested that the follow up letters to all nominees should come from the Office on Volunteerism and the Board

#### **Service and Outreach Committee Report:**

Steven Valdez reported on the committee's discussion on the elevator speech and took kit. They discussed having bulleted items for the Board to use. Steven also reported the Committee discussed the

Virginia Service website and updates on the new website. Steven also said the Committee discussed Mayor's Day on April 5, 2016. Several (4 or 5) regional events are being planned. Once set, staff will notify Board members to attend and/or make remarks.

**Program Committee Report:**

Vanessa Diamond reported that the Committee Members talked about the proposal cycle for formula grant funds. She noted that this cycle would be very competitive. Vanessa also reported that the review panel will need to review at least 8 applications and that everyone will read and review all of them. Vanessa said the strong preference would be in-person review. She noted that reviewers need to be either staff or members of the Board or employees of government. She noted that being a reviewer is a challenging process but a fantastic opportunity.

Vanessa also reported that the Volunteer Generation Fund programs are funded by a pool of funds that come from The Corporation of National and Community Services. Virginia has 4 programs getting Volunteer Generation Fund support and all are doing well. Vanessa talked about those programs and their location. Vanessa said this funding stream is to support and gain more volunteers across the Commonwealth.

**Other Announcements**

Leah mentioned Read Across America day is March 2, 2016 and asked the board members to participate if possible. She also notified the board of a new honorary month: April is Month of the Military Child. The Governor will do a proclamation April 15, 2016. Lettie Bien said purple was the color for multi-branch operations and that everyone can show support by wearing purple. Leah Walker will send information to staff to send out the Board. Leah also noted the Department of Education has a tool kit to use in participation. Lettie

**Adjournment**

Motion was made and adopted to adjourn at 2:18 PM.

Minutes prepared by Eva Hite

Submitted by Gail Harris